



Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd

RMB 1282 Langs Road, Blampied, Victoria, 3364

Telephone: (03) 5345 7466 Fax: (03) 5348 3253

Email: coopvic@netconnect.com.au

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Jennifer Mansfield
Executive Officer
People Together Project
622 Lygon Street
NORTH CARLTON VIC 3054

Dear Jennifer:

I write to express my concern about the decision of the Public Inquiry into State Education not to allow the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd to present its submission at the hearing on 14 May 1999.

This decision was apparently made after I received a letter stating the scheduled time and date for my attendance to make this presentation. I attended the hearing on 14 May 1999 and was informed that reasonable attempts had been made to inform me that our presentation had been cancelled. I accept that there had been reasonable attempts and that it was just unfortunate that I did not receive the message.

What is of concern is the second judgement that our contribution is of such low priority that it did not justify 15 minutes of the Inquiry's time – five minutes for a verbal presentation and ten minutes for questions.

I have been reassured that our written submission will be taken into account but the extent of this is difficult to determine in the absence of questioning which would reveal the indicative fit of our views.

A point I was going to make in a verbal presentation was that there is a tendency to exclude the co-operative option from public policy debate and that it was reassuring that the Inquiry was open to a presentation on the co-operative option.

Co-operatives are formed by individuals and their communities in response to mutual need and the failure of the private and public sectors. It is ironic, for I assume that the origin of the Inquiry was in response to a similar impetus – a community established Inquiry in the absence of a public sector Inquiry.

The critical education issues for schools are voluntary choice for stakeholders (parents, students and teachers), democratic systems of governance and appropriate and adequate resourcing. The co-operative model has much to offer in an open examination of these issues.

In co-operation,

David Griffiths
Chairman